

Bridge near Camelot
Development in 1980



CONTROVERSY

Troubled bridge over Orem water opens July 25

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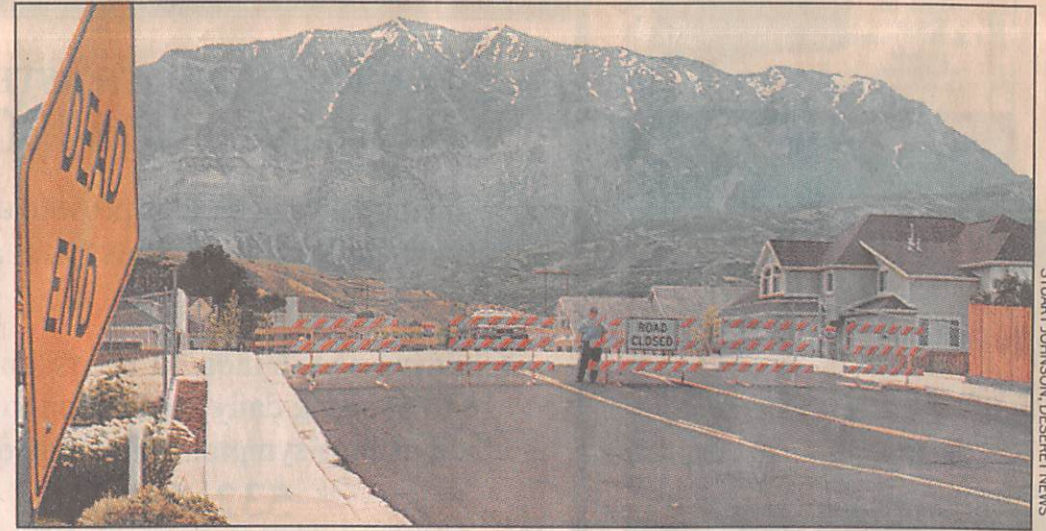
OREM — Nowadays when someone is advised to "take a flying leap," they may want to check out the new 1200 North bridge in Orem — if they can get past the guard.

According to some local citizens, it's a great bridge for catching air.

Richard Manning, director of public works for the city, said it's apparently also a great one for catching the brunt of bad publicity.

The bridge, built on 1200 North to span the Murdock Canal at approximately 800 East, has been the subject of controversy from drawing board to finished asphalt.

Neighbors — who originally lobbied the City Council for the bridge — later decided



A guard stands watch to prevent people from moving barricades on 1200 North bridge.

they did not want their youngsters to have more access to what they felt was a deadly water hazard. They were upset to find the plans included gates that would be left open during the peak runoff season.

City officials felt they needed to provide a

second way out of the neighborhood or risk liability suits in case of flood, fire or natural disaster.

Bureau of Reclamation officials wanted

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BRIDGE

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their service access left open to both sides of the canal — which provides water to the Provo Water Users Association — and must run unimpeded to shareholders all along the waterway.

Only after several heated discussions and months of negotiations did the city get permission from the Bureau of Reclamation to build the bridge, completed this past month and opened for one week before more controversy shut it down.

"We didn't see any reason to close it off once it was finished, even though the gates were not in," said Manning. "Yes, the letter of the law dictates that the gates will

go in at the same time as the bridge, but reason says 'hey, everything is in order, why not use it?'"

The contractor hired to install the electronic gates is behind schedule but expected to complete his work before the end of this week, said Manning.

Area residents apparently felt the same way about waiting for the gates and simply began driving across the new bridge, cutting through the temporary barriers stretched across the service roadways.

That news upset Bureau of Reclamation officials, who complained to Orem officials, who consequently posted barriers and a guard to keep people off the bridge.

The guard will remain until the official ribbon-cutting, which has

been reset from June 23 to July 25, said Manning. He did not know the bridge was being regarded as a skateboard ramp for cars during the brief time it was open.

Some say the bridge opened up a new sport known as "seeing how much air one can catch coming off the 1200 North bridge."

"I guess people can do that if they want to," said Manning. "If you drive the bridge at normal speed, you don't notice anything but the center point is a little higher than usual."

Because the Murdock Canal is concrete-lined and a bridge must have a certain amount of clearance above the highest point, this bridge has a higher center point, he said. "And then there is an elevation change. There always is with a bridge."

